

Now, assuming that I have encouraged you to sign up, you will have an opportunity to get together at a 'meet-up' in the conference hotel prior to the general session. There you will also meet other 'newbies', as well as seasoned professionals. Attending any professional conference for the first time can be daunting to even the most gregarious of us, so I offered to be the buddy/conference mentor coordinator for the conferences in 2013 and 2014. Getting in touch with your buddy/conference mentee prior to the conference by email and/or telephone is important.

Usually conference mentors/buddies make the initial outreach to their conference mentee. The conference mentor can provide answers to questions that newbies no doubt will have. Speaking or emailing with the conference mentor/buddy relieves some of the stress newbies might be feeling about how to dress, what to bring, not to mention, what to expect. By having this introduction to a buddy (conference mentor), a first time attendee will have less trepidation walking into that Friday morning breakfast or the first session. Just having someone to sit beside often allows a first timer to breathe a sigh of relief. After the buddy meet-up, the first conference event you will attend (which I encourage you not to miss) is the general session/annual meeting, followed by a cocktail reception. Here you will be introduced to the board of directors who will outline the future of ICD. The next two days are spent with educational sessions including breaks and lunches in between. There is an awards and recognition banquet on Friday night, and it is always impressive to see which colleagues have completed the various levels of certification. I love cheering for them and their fine accomplishments.

On a separate note, attending the ICD Conferences has allowed me to visit cities I had never visited. Denver in 2013 was a personal highlight. Several colleagues and I flew in a day early and took an excursion to Pike's Peak. Many attendees use free time to experience shopping and dining opportunities or visit nearby family members. Finally, regardless of whether one works with the chronically disorganized, it is recommended that a professional organizer attend at least one ICD Conference during his/her career. As a new professional organizer in 2000, I had no knowledge of hoarding or ADHD. It was only as the years progressed and I worked with these unique clients that I was initially introduced to NAPO and then eventually to ICD. I realized that educating myself through ICD would be crucial to my success and that of my clients. If you are considering attending the ICD Conference in September, I highly encourage you to do so. I have never heard of anyone who was disappointed with their experience!

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